

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim 5 has been rejected as failing to comply with the written description requirement. As observed by the Examiner, it is the connecting means that is step-shaped or stair-shaped. Claim 5 has been amended accordingly. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested as it removes an issue and does not impose a burden on the Examiner.

Drawings

The objection to the drawing is now moot in view of the amendment to claim 5.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

The earlier prior art rejections have been withdrawn, but the claims are now newly rejected with primary reliance being had on newly cited US 6505452 (Hannig) when considered with US 2003/0024199 (Pervan) and/or 7065935 (Eisermann).

According to the Examiner, the profiled cross-sectional portions 47 and 48 have the same but inverted geometry. This is not the case. As is evident from Fig. 8, the geometries are different in that a space L1 is provided between the upper-side hook portion 47 and the lower-side web 49 of one panel and not between the lower-side hook portion 48 of the other panel and the upper-side web 46 of the first panel. Consequently, the geometries are not substantially the same, taking into account an advantage of the claimed configuration being the avoidance of different milling heads and/or processes.

Regarding the claims rejected over a combination of Hannig with Pervan or Eisermann, the combinations lack reasonable basis. Hannig already has a means for locking the panels together, so there simply is no reason to include any of the locking devices of Pervan or Eisermann, even if there was some meaningful way of incorporating those locking devices into the connecting means of Hannig. The proposed combinations would so alter the panels of Hannig that they would no longer interconnect in their intended manner.

Consequently, the prior art rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

The absence in this reply of any comments on any other contentions set forth in the Office Action should not be construed to be an acquiescence therein. Rather, no comment is needed since the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons.

Respectfully submitted,

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